



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Date: June 19, 2023

Subject: **Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting – June 6, 2023**

Origin: Paula Sorhaitz, Superintendent of Education

Please find attached a copy of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting held on June 6, 2023.

TB/PS/dp

Attachment: Minutes of June 6, 2023



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Durham Catholic District School Board  
June 6, 2023 at 7:30 PM  
Virtual and at CEC – North & South Board Rooms

**Members Present:**

W. Heeney (Durham Down Syndrome Association); J. Sorhaitz (Learning Disabilities Ontario) S. Casola (Autism Ontario) virtually; A. Massis (Community Representative) virtually

**Trustees Present:**

J. McCafferty, virtually

**Staff Present:**

P. Sorhaitz (Superintendent of Education); F. Mosier (Student Services Coordinator); S. Phoenix (Senior Manager, of Social Work and Child and Youth Counsellors, Lead Attendance Officer; E. McCall (Communications) virtually

**SEAC Representatives:**

D. Allen (CPCO Representative) virtually, M. Cope (CUPE Representative) virtually

**Regrets:**

R. De Souza (Trustee); V. Adamo (VOICE for the Hearing Impaired); C. Nosseir (Grandview Kids); C. Julien (Community Representative), B. Larson (APSSP Representative), L. Jemmott (OECTA Representative)

1. Opening

Vice Chair Heeney called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m., offered the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.1. Memorials and Prayer
- 1.2. Land Acknowledgements
- 1.3. Roll Call and Apologies
- 1.4. Call to Order
- 1.5. Approval of the Agenda

**Motion:**

SS-2023-06-06-01  
Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by J. Sorhaitz.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Tuesday, June 6, 2023 meeting, as printed." CARRIED

1.6. Approval of the minutes of May 9, 2023 SEAC Meeting

**Motion:**

SS-2023-06-06-02

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by A. Massis.

"That the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Tuesday, May 9, 2023 meeting, as printed." CARRIED

1.7. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Items for Information/Decision

2.1. Announcements

None

2.2. Presentations

None

2.3. Discussion Items

2.3.1. Review Priorities 2023-2024

Superintendent Sorhaitz reported on the departmental goals for next year.

The Student Services Department will focus on developing high-level departmental goals that flow from feedback obtained through the Special Education Review - LEAD Canada, parent/guardian/caregiver, administrator, and department surveys. Student Services will continue to support the system and organization to:

- Improve accessibility and inclusion
- Analyze and improve efficiencies in the service delivery model
- Build collaborative, faith-filled learning cultures that promote a sense of belonging and staff efficacy

2.4. Business arising from previous meeting

2.4.1. Feedback/Input re: 2022-2023 Special Education Plan

Julie Sorhaitz noted that in the Special Education Plan:

- the importance of a paper trail that IEPs provide to secondary students as they approach post-secondary transitions

- Service delivery model - Standard 2.1 does not make reference to the Identification, placement and review committees (IPRC).
- Greater emphasis on transition planning for LD secondary school students

2.4.2. Draft letter to Ministry re: EA funding  
Deferred

2.5. Staff Reports

2.5.1. Student Services Report - Shelley Phoenix, Christine Congrady, Paula Sorhaitz

**Francesca Mosier, on behalf of Christine Congrady reported the following:**

- One applicant to the Provincial Demonstration School for Learning Disabilities was successful in their application and will attend Trillium for the 2023-2024 school year. This is the first student from DCDSB that will attend Trillium, which is located in Milton. Placement is based on availability and is determined by the Provincial Community on Learning Disabilities (PCLD).
- Four students currently attending Sagonaska Provincial Demonstration School in Belleville are expected to return to DCDSB in September. Transition meetings are underway.
- In partnership with DDSB & DCDSB, the Abilities Centre will be offering a Summer Therapeutic Recreation (TR) program.
- Therapeutic Recreation (TR) uses community TR and activity-based programming to improve well-being, physical and mental health, as well as functional capacity for individuals.
- The summer program is an extension of TRIS (Therapeutic Recreation in Schools Program) currently being offered at All Saints C.S.S., Monsignor John Pereyma C.S.S. and St. Joseph C.S. in Oshawa.
- Six submissions were received for the Power To Achieve Scholarship Contest; thank you to everyone who submitted an entry.
- Congratulations to Christian Powlette from Notre Dame; Christian wrote a poem entitled "Flying with Broken Wings." He created a video recording of himself reading the poem with graphic accompaniment.

- Christian will receive a \$500 scholarship toward post-secondary education from LDADR.

**Shelley Phoenix provided the following Mental Health Report:**

School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) has a series of four lessons to support the development of basic mental health knowledge and help-seeking skills. The lessons are designed for use with secondary students, focusing on building their understanding of mental health and mental illness, signs of mental health problems, and how/where to access help when needed. This year SMHO has introduced two new lessons that have been shared with our secondary educators:

- The Challenge of Change: Navigating the Transition from Secondary School
- Test and exam stress- Strategies to Perform Your Best

Planning ahead, Student Services will be posting three temporary Speech-Language Pathologists and one full-time Psychologist positions and will be planning for possible summer supports and Professional Development for staff.

Information regarding how to access support over the summer, as well as tips for maintaining positive mental health and well-being over the summer, was shared with families in the DCDSB News.

Coach Advocates for Black Students are partnering with Queen's University, Ontario Tech University and McMaster University to offer STEM camps in order for Black youth to see them represented in STEM fields and experience positive mentorship.

School Mental Health Ontario is developing lesson plans to support gr. 7 and 8 educators in teaching the Health and Phys-ed curriculum focused on mental health. These modules will be available in September 2023.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Sorhaitz informed that an application was submitted to the Ministry requesting additional funding for Educational Assistants. Funding decisions are expected by the end of June.

Superintendent Sorhaitz announced that Morlan Washington, Coach/Advocate for Black students was honoured with this year's Distinguished Catholic Educator award for the Student Services department. Congratulations Morlan!

Samantha Anderson, PST at St. John Paul C.S., Mary Anne Strickland, PST at St. Mark the Evangelist C.S. and Mimi Brown, PST at St. Joseph C.S. in Uxbridge are retiring. They were all honoured at today's PST Meeting, the last one of the year. Special thanks to all of them for their hard work and dedication to our students.

**Motion:**

SS-2023-06-06-03

Approval of the June 6, 2023, verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by S. Casola.

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee accept the verbal Coordinator, Mental Health Leader and Superintendent Reports of the June 6, 2023 meeting.” CARRIED

2.6. Association Reports

**Learning Disabilities Association – Durham Region - Julie Sorhaitz**

**New Programs or Services:**

Learning Disabilities Association is in the process of updating the mailing list. If DCDSB staff, families and anyone else in our community would like to make sure they are on the list, please message us on our website (About Us section) or by email: [info@ldadr.on.ca](mailto:info@ldadr.on.ca)

**Other Information:**

DCDSB Power To Achieve Scholarship winner was chosen and will be announced at the meeting. Website: [www.ldadr.on.ca](http://www.ldadr.on.ca)

**Autism Ontario - Shona Casola**

**Upcoming Meetings or Conferences:**

Both programs and services, as well as workshops, are listed on this page that can be accessed virtually and are available in the Durham Region

[https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom\\_325=Central+East&event\\_type\\_id=All&custom\\_356=All](https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom_325=Central+East&event_type_id=All&custom_356=All)

**New Programs or Services:**

Many new programs posted on our events page – including sibling support group for older siblings, parent (mums and dads) support groups, and a Black caregiver circle can be found here:

[https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom\\_325=All&event\\_type\\_id=20](https://www.autismontario.com/events?custom_325=All&event_type_id=20)

**Updates and Information:**

**Autism Data Collaborative (ADC) Engagement Event - June 19, 2023,**

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

The Autism Data Collaborative (ADC) was launched in 2021 with the goal of facilitating and accelerating multidisciplinary, multi-sector, and multi-jurisdictional data initiatives and health services and policy research for autism.

This is a free, virtual event and is an opportunity to learn and contribute to national research and policy initiatives. For more information and to register for the event visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/autism-data-collaborative-engagement-event-tickets-600669527727>

**Travel Tools for Autism**

Toronto Pearson has partnered with Autism Ontario and Magnusmode to provide these resources to assist autistic and neurodiverse people and their caregivers.

Their interactive tool for autistic and neurodiverse people and their caregivers includes a checklist for each step while travelling through the airport.

**My Toronto Pearson Activity Book**

The activity book assists autistic and neurodiverse children and their caregivers in preparing for their upcoming trip, from arriving at the airport to boarding a plane. You can learn more here:

<https://www.torontopearson.com/en/accessibility/travel-tools-for-autism-and-other-diverse-needs>

2.7. Correspondence

None

3. Other Business

3.1. Board Communications

3.2. Motion to Adjourn

**Motion:**

SS-2023-06-06-04

Motion moved by J. McCafferty and motion seconded by J. Sorhaitz.

“THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of May 9, 2023, adjourn.”

CARRIED

3.2.1. The next meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 @ 7:30 pm

3.3. Closing Prayer

Closing prayer was offered by W. Heeney.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

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Valerie Adamo  
Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee

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Paula Sorhaitz  
Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretary: Delfina Pinto